DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 858 EA 012 897

AUTHOR Hamilton, Stephen F.
TITLE The Structure of Freedom: The Operational Structure of an Alternative Educational Organization.
PUB DATE Apr 80
NOTE 19p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 1980)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Apprenticeships: *Educational Alternatives: *Educational Programs: *Organizations (Groups): Program Descriptions: Secondary Education
IDENTIFIERS *New York (Ithaca)

ABSTRACT

The Learning Web--an alternative educational organization discussed in this paper-matches high school students with adults who can teach them a skill. Staff members either contact a young person who has been referred by a school, or a young person initiates contact with the organization. An intake interview is followed by placement of the apprentice with a compatible mentor. Termination forms are used to secure written evaluations from the mentor, the apprentice, the parents, and the staff. Thus, the procedures used for intake, placement, and termination constitute a key structural feature of the organization and provide a good test of the realization of educational goals. (Author/LD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED182858

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Structure of Freedom:
The Operational Structure of an Alternative Educational Organization

Stephen F. Hamilton

Cornell University

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April, 1980

The author would like to thank Karen Carr, David Connor, and Michele Whitham of the Learning Web for their cooperation and Walter Frankel, Joline Hemminger, and Christine Sarfaty for their assistance in conducting the study reported here.

EA 012 497

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S Hamilton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Structure in Alternative Education

The myth of the lack of structure misleads both supporters and opponents of unconventional educational programs by diverting attention from the key question of the match between goals and structures. Even the more charitable description of such alternatives as open classrooms and alternative schools as being "less structured" implies that social structure can be more or less present when the real issues are what kind of structure exists and whether they are appropriate and functional. Increased attention to the structures of alternative education programs would make those programs more effective and shift the debate over their desirability to more rewarding questions than whether or not children need structure.

The revival of Progressive educational ideas and practices in the late '60's and early '70's included the reappearance of a fallacy John Dewey warned against while the original Progressive movement was strong-the tendency to stand conventional educational practice on its head rather than to develop new practices based on affirmative principles.

> There is always the danger in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively. Then it takes its clew in practice from that which is rejected instead of from the constructive development of its own philosophy (1938, p. 20).

Open classrooms and alternative schools embody many of the same ideas and practices espoused by the Progressives. The founder of one alternative school illustrated perfectly the tendency Dewey warned against:

> We had read John Holt's books and a lot of other things, so we had an idea of what we wanted to do. We didn't want to have grading, mandatory attendance, detention hall, passes and bells and all that jazz (Graubard, 197!; emphasis added).

The movement to create alternative approaches to education is not as prominent as it was a decade ago, but it has not disappeared. Instead it has been incorporated into school systems across the country, where what were once seen as radical practices have now become acceptable options. Some of the problems that existed in previous

years persist, but now we can seek guidance in solving those problems from research and from examples of alternative programs that have lasted.

Argyris (1974) has noted that people in alternative schools have great difficulty behaving toward each other in ways that are consistent with the ideals they espouse. He did not present this observation as an indictment of those people but as an illustration of the difficulties entailed in creating any organization requiring behavior different from that "programmed" into all of us. Argyris did not argue that the problem with alternative schools was a lack of structure, as is frequently asserted by their detractors, but a failure to develop a structure that is consistent with their values and purposes.

Moore (1978) analyzed an alternative school and interpreted many of its difficulties as the result of "structural ambiguity in the social order of the school: divergent definitions of scenes, incomplete social forms, and inconsistent behaviors" (p.459). Describing a school's structure as ambiguous is much more accurate and useful than asserting that no structure exists because, with Argyris' warning that "espoused theories" often conflict with "theories-in-use" and Dewey's that educational innovation must be grounded in affirmative principles rather than the rejection of convention, this description points to the need for organizational structures that are consistent with the values and purposes of alternative education.

The Learning Web

The Learning Web is an alternative educational organization that departs from convention even more dramatically than most alternative schools. It is not a school at all but an educational brokering service, matching "apprentices," mostly junior and senior high school students, with "mentors," mostly adults, who have a skill that the apprentices wish to learn. It operates out of offices on the Cornell campus in Ithaca, New York, and serves young people in all of Tompkins County. Some adults and secondary school dropouts are also apprentices.

The most complete statement of the Learning Web's purposes is found in an article written by one of its two founders (Whitham, 1976). She neatly summarized the combination

of personal-educational and social-institutional goals guiding the Learning Web as, "to liberate both the individual child from the deadening effects of school and the educational process from its entanglement with 'schooling'" (p. 21). Its purposes, that is to say, include both the provision of educational opportunities to individuals, and the creation of an educational institution that is an alternative to conventional schools.

The name, learning web, comes from Illich, who, in Deschooling Society (1971), offered a critique of "coercive" institutions, schools being a prime example, and a vision of "convival" institutions as an alternative. Convivial institutions were described as informal, controlled by their users, and termed "educational networks" or "learning webs." Staff acknowledge two other writers as contributing to the philosophical basis of the Learning Web. Dewey (1916, 1938) deplored the dichotomy between thought and action and espoused goal-directed activity in community settings as a pedagogical technique. Freire (1970) applied Dewey's ideas in a more explicitely political context and wrote of "education as the practice of freedom," a phrase that serves as a motto for the Learning Web.

For the young people who participate, the Learning Web is a chance to learn a skill, to explore the resources of the community, and to try out and observe adult roles. The Learning Web stresses the importance of the apprentice taking responsibility for her own learning, making choices and keeping commitments. A good apprenticeship teaches a young person that she has talents and that, as the second founder, David Connor, said in an interview, "they have something more to offer the community than they thought... This turns them into young people who begin to see educational opportunities at every corner and then have some authority and know how to mobilize community resources."

The adults who serve as "mentors" and the larger community are also expected to benefit from their association with the Learning Web. The founders and current staff hope that the experience of working closely with one or more young people to teach something they know will be a fulfilling one, expanding the mentors' visions of themselves. They also believe that the range of learning experiences made available to young people

will demonstrate to all the richness of the community as a resource for learning and the beneficial effects of a noncoercive institution.

Connor, an activist campus priest, and Whitham, a teacher in an alternative junior high school that was closed by conservative opposition, made plans for the Learning Web over the summer of 1972 and began operating that fall with 12 apprentices. When data were collected for this study during the 1976-77 school year, the number of participants had grown to 164, and a change in leadership was underway. The new co-directors have maintained or enlarged the number of apprentices and added some activities in which participants are in peer groups rather than working individually with adults. They have also made special efforts to place troubled young people in apprenticeships.

Cornell has provided financial support and office space to the Learning Web since its founding. Tax money for youth programs from state, county, and city governments has been allocated to the Learning Web, which has also received private donations and United Way funds. The Ithaca School Board has consistently refused to support the Learning Web, but staff have developed close working relations with principals, guidance counselors and teachers in several schools and some apprentices are granted school credit for their activities.

The variety of activities in which apprentices engage can be illustrated by listing the placements of those we interviewed and observed in the spring of 1977: veterinary surgeon's office, auto repair shop, printer, weaver, peer counseling center, law office, youth recreation center, potter, electronic music group, research greenhouse, butcher shop, video group, planned parenthood office. Although many of these placements are career related, Learning Web staff are clear that their primary purpose is not career education but giving young people the chance to learn something important to them through an informal relationship with a competent and concerned adult. They would agree with Arms and Denman, who operated a program with some similar features:

> Preparing young people to make future choices is not at all the same as providing them present opportunities to choose. Career education is a means for preparing young citizens for what the planners and

> futurists predict will be the necessary work of tomorrow; it is not a means for providing them growing experience that speaks to their present needs (1975, p. 169).

While the "learning webs" that Illich envisioned were connected by a computer, which would simply pair a person wishing to learn something with another having that skill to teach, the Learning Web's founders understood that simply making such a service available was not sufficient. Although a computer can easily be programmed to make such matches, most people have been "programmed" in Argyris' sense neither to see themselves as having anything to teach nor to take so much responsibility for their own learning that they would make use of such an opportunity. This is especially true of those most in need of such a service, young people whose school experience has taught them that they learn poorly and have little of value to offer anyone else.

The Structure of the Learning Web

A central purpose of the Learning Web is to allow learners to take more control over the content and conditions of their learning. This is a purpose shared with many alternative schools and with the open classroom movement. The opportunity for learners to choose appears to be the condition that critics of such alternatives define as "lack of structure." (See Walberg and Thomas, 1972.) The presence of structure, it would appear, is signaled for these people by teacher control over what is to be learned and how learning will occur. The structure of the Learning Web provides an excellent illustration of the fallacy of this conception because it is a structure that enables learners to control their learning.

Although it does not comprehend everything that could be considered the structure of the Learning Web, which would have to include such matters as their advisory board and the pattern of relations among staff, the procedure whereby potential apprentices come into the program, are matched with a mentor, and then assisted in ending their

apprenticeship, is the operational core of the Learning Web. This process has three major steps that are designated by staff as "intake," "placement," and "termination."*

An Overview of the Intake, Placement, and Termination Procedure

There are two ways in which most young people make contact with the Learning Web. Either Learning Web staff members contact a young person who has been referred by a school or other youth-serving agency, or young people initiate contact with the Learning Web. According to the 1975 Annual Report, about a third of the apprentices that year were referred by schools, another third by other youth-serving agencies, and the remaining third initiated contact themselves. A few had been referred by parents. The number initiating contact on their own appeared to be growing, a trend that staff interpreted as resulting from informal communication among youth.

Initial contact is most frequently made by telephone. Guidance counselors or other referring professionals might, however, schedule an interview for a young person with a Learning Web staff member. During this initial exchange, or at the next meeting, staff members explain what the Learning Web is about and explore possible interests with the young person.

Once an interest has been identified and some possible placements discussed, the staff person tries to locate a suitable mentor. Suitability is determined both by the match between mentor skills with apprentice's interests and by the staff person's judgment of the likelihood that the two people will be compatible. Probably the most staff energy is expended in searching for adults who have skills young people want to learn and who are both willing and able to work with an apprentice.

The match that a staff person arranges between a mentor and apprentice is presented to both as something to try out. Both are given the opportunity to decide the match

*The terminology appears to have been borrowed from medicine, social work, or law enforcement. Participants and their files are referred to as "cases."

isn't working after a week or two. After a "placement" has been made and has passed this trial period, staff members try to monitor it to assure that both parties are satisfied. This is done most frequently by phone calls to the mentor, the apprentice, and the apprentice's parents. Sometimes a placement is established with a predetermined end point; other times it is allowed to run its course, which may cover a few weeks or many months. Most placements last from six weeks to a few months. At the time of termination, an attempt is made by staff to evaluate the experience in collaboration with the apprentice, mentor, and the apprentice's parents. This is seen as helping the young person make sense of the experience and it contributes to enlarging the Learning Web's file of effective mentors.

Two features should be pointed out that distinguish this procedure from most of those that operate in schools. First, the scheduling is extremely flexible. There are no set times at which apprenticeships begin and end. When an interest has been identified and a placement found, the apprenticeship begins. When either the mentor or the apprentice decides it has run its course, it ends. Second, there is no equivalent to failure. If a potential apprentice cannot identify an interest or if an appropriate mentor cannot be found, there is alwasy the possibility of trying again. If an apprentice finds that a placement is not proving to be interesting, the next step is seeking another placement, rather than choosing between persisting in an unhappy placement or leaving the program. Learning Web staff believe that the prospective veterinarian who learns he cannot stand the sight of blood has had just as valuable an experience as the slow learner who discovers an aptitude for electronic repair work.

Two more points deserve comment because they belie the assumptions underlying Illich's vision. The step of identifying young people's interests has proved to be extremely difficult with some young people, especially those who are served least well by schools. Second, because the placement process can be so difficult and time-consuming, Learning Web staff have had to develop a set of "hurdles" to help them identify those potential apprentices who are committed enough and who have enough self-confidence and skill to follow through with a placement and carry out their part of the arrangement.

Intake

The difficulty of just identifying young people's interests and the persistence and sensitivity required of Learning Web staff in some cases is illustrated by an intake interview observed in the Learning Web office.

David Connor is interviewing Lana, a black woman who appears to be in her upper teens. She seems very nervous, playing constantly with a crocheted cap in her hands. David starts out telling her about the program and chatting generally, apparently to help her relax. He asks her about her interests but she doesn't respond, just looks at her hat.

David: I know if I was sitting there and some guy was throwing questions at me I'd get uptight and wonder if I was getting trapped. Don't let yourself feel trapped. You can get out of it whenever you want.

Lana still doesn't respond. David asks her some more questions about her interests.

David: What about art? Do you like to paint, or work with clay? Does that sound good to you?

No answer from Lana. She continues to look at her hat. After what seems like a long silence, she shakes her head no.

David: Well, what about something with body motion, like karate or dance?

She shakes her head no again. After suggesting a number of areas and receiving no response but a shake of Lana's head, David asks her how far she has gotten in school.

Lana: I finished school!

She seems upset and defensive, offended by the implication that she might not have graduated. David continues in a calm voice.

David: Well, did you get psyched about anything in school, really enjoy anything?

Lana: I liked biology.

David: Good. That's a possibility. Maybe working in a lab?

Lana: I liked working on marine biology.

David: Did you like being outside?

Lana: Yes!

David: That's good to know. Did you like camping?

Lana: Yes.

The conversation works into the possibility of her working with the Youth Bureau's camping program. She appears much more open and less nervous.

Sometimes helping potential apprentices identify interests they might explore through the Learning Web is a matter of asking enough questions and throwing out enough suggestions that one or a few possiblities strike a response. But for some, who either have too little information or are too unsure of themselves to make a choice, the Learning Web staff has developed other strategies. The most common is the field trip. One or more potential apprentices go with a staff member or volunteer to visit likely places of interest. A newspaper office is one example. These trips give youth an introduction to several settings and a chance to see what it might be like to be an apprentice in them. Another example of this approach was a series of visits to architects' offices by a boy who expressed an interest in drawing. The visits helped him understand and state that he was interested in "artist drawing," not "architect drawing." Sometimes field trips are simply drives around the community with stops at what strike the riders as interesting places. Values clarification exercies have also been used to help young people work out what they are interested in and then set priorities for themselves.

The need for such an intensive investment of staff time in the process of identifying interests, coupled with the even greater investment required to arrange for mentors, led very early in the Learning Web's life to the realization that it could not serve everyone. In the early days, staff went to great lengths to get some potential apprentices to spend the time they had agreed to spend at their placements, telephoning reminders on the appointed day and even driving them to the location. When these young people persisted in failing to keep their commitments, staff concluded that they simply could not compensate for lack of real interest or irresponsibility or whatever else caused this behavior. Given their limited resources, they had to concentrate on those who were ready to take advantage of the apprenticeship.

This principle was translated into "hurdles" that became part of the intake procedure. A hurdle is any point at which the young person is required to demonstrate initiative.

At its simplest it is asking a potential apprentice to call the office a day or two after the intitial contact is made. The most universal hurdle is showing up at the appointment at which interests and possible placements are discussed with a staff member.

Hurdles have both diagnostic and screening functions. Failure to make a phone call or come to an appointment is a signal that the young person may not really be interested in a placement or that she may not be able to carry out her responsibilities if one is arranged. These hurdles are not arbitrary; they are the same kinds of actions required of apprentices: following prescribed procedures, keeping in touch, and getting to places on time.

Unfortunately, these are also some of the same kinds of requirements that schools place on youth. Therefore, Learning Web staff must take pains to explain exactly what the prospective apprentice must do and what the results will be. They follow-up on most young people who miss a hurdle and offer them another chance, sometimes several chances. But repeated failure to clear the hurdles results in staff inaction on the case, and staff explain this in advance. The young person has then chosen not to continue seeking an apprenticeship. Those who are able to learn, with staff coaching, how to leap the hurdles have also learned what they must do to keep their apprenticeship going. Those who are not able to learn this lesson are screened out of the program without the time-consuming and goodwill-wasting process of setting up an apprenticeship that is never consummated. Failure to clear one or more hurdles does not mean exclusion from the program; young people can always reactivate the intake process by demonstrating their initiative and responsibility.

Hurdles are particularly important for those young people who are referred to the Learning Web by adults. Often it turns out that only the adult sees participation in the Learning Web as a good idea and the young person agrees simply to humor the guidance counselor or probation officer. For example, we accompanied David Connor to a local junior high school one afternoon where he interviewed two potential apprentices. The first proved to be very interested in cooking, while the second denied ever having expressed

an interest in the Learning Web and didn't seem to know why he had been asked to report to the guidance counselor's office. A presentation to students at another junior high school yielded a list of 15 interested students, but only two of those cleared the first hurdle by calling the Learning Web office as they were instructed to do. Those two were very quickly and satisfactorily placed.

Placement

Given a statement of interest from the young person and the availability of a potential mentor in the area, two steps remain to make a good match. The first is a judgment regarding the likely personal chemistry between mentor and apprentice. Learning Web staff try to assure that a shy young person is not matched with a gruff mentor, for example. The second step in making the match is trying to assure that both parties understand and are satisfied with the terms. Staff members try to communicate to apprentices the amount of time and effort they spend to arrange an apprenticeship and the effort required of mentors in order to impress upon them the seriousness of their commitment. The trial period is important here, when both mentor and apprentice are assured that they can terminate the relationship easily.

The formal means of clarifying expectations, used especially for apprentices who wish to receive school credit for their work, is the "Learning Contract Agreement." This document states the amount of time involved and the learning objectives and work expectations for the apprentice. It includes a statement from the mentor regarding the learning opportunities to be provided. Signatures of the mentor, Learning Web staff, and school contact person make the document a formal record of the experience and justify the granting of credit.

The importance of clarifying expectations is illustrated by one case in which a volunteer worked for some weeks to try to arrange a placement for a young man who was interested in plumbing. After learning that plumbing is a very difficult field to enter, the volunteer followed the advice of a paid staff member and sought a placement with a building maintenance

supervisor who did plumbing along with numerous other jobs and was not committed to protecting the trade as union plumbers tend to be. After explaining more than once that this was to be a learning experience, not a job, and that no money would be involved, the volunteer matched the apprentice with a mentor. The next day she received a call from the mentor saying that the apprentice had asked to be paid. The apprenticeship was terminated immediately and the young man was given some advice on job seeking.

Once a match has been made, Learning Web staff try to keep in touch to see that both parties are satisified and that it is working as planned. Contact with both parties is important because sometimes supposed apprentices will report positively on their placements when further checking reveals that they are not actually working with their mentor at all. Another reason for visiting the placement sites is to assure that the young people are not being exploited, that they are learning in addition to helping. Contact with parents is also useful in keeping the apprenticeship running smoothly.

Follow-up of this nature is probably the weakest part of the Learning Web's procedures. The amount of time required to locate mentors and arrange placements after initial intake interviews and related activites have been completed leaves the staff person relieved just to have made the placement and overburdened with the demands of new potential apprentices. The time and energy to conduct follow-up activities are not sufficient unless urgent situations arise, such as an apprentice not reporting to the site.

The limitations on follow-up mean that apprentices rarely discuss with staff their experiences and feelings about them until they have terminated their apprenticeship. The goal of helping young people think about their experience, to "integrate" it, is acknowledged by staff to be unattained in many cases.

Termination

Termination, ideally, is the time for summing up the experience and evaluating it from several perspectives. Forms are used to secure written evaluations from the mentor, the apprentice, the apprentice's parents, and the Learning Web staff person

in charge. These forms serve as a record for the Learning Web and help to document its accomplishments as well as providing a growing file of placement opportunities. They are also seen as a means to help the young person reflect on the experience. Termination of a successful apprenticeship, therefore, is the last step in the learning process as sponsored and planned by the Learning Web.

However, termination before completion is also a possiblity. Usually termination is either directly or indirectly the apprentice's choice. Sometimes a mentor will terminate an apprenticeship, but that is rare. Staff members will take the initiative to terminate in cases where the apprentice has not fulfilled his or her obligations. One such termination, reported by an observer and discussed among staff and volunteers, illustrates this process.

> Joel* had really given Marion* (volunteer staff member) a bit of a run-around, not answering messages that were left regularly and persistently at both home and school. After close to a month of this, Marion decided that Joel was really not showing the needed ambition and motivation to be a part of the Learning Web. She decided to communicate this to Joel and "terminate" the case. Joel had missed all the "hurdles."
>
> When she called she was a bit angry. She said she felt slighted by Joel and did not want to be his slave. She had been doing all the work to arrange a placement with a car mechanic. The mentor was expecting to meet him and do some teaching, but Joel never showed. Marion let Joel know she was aggravated and displeased. She was very honest and very firm.
>
> She waited for Joel's response, which turned out to be silence. She said he had the choice of taking action and trying to rectify the situation or letting it slide. She could not carry the burden of his indirect decision not to be part of the Web, which he communicated by not returning her messages. He chose to let it slide.

The fact that this termination was a topic of conversation among volunteers and paid staff afterward suggests that it was more dramatic than most.

Although Marion left the possiblity open for Joel to decide to continue in the Learning Web, her tone was not calculated to attract him back. The more common approach is represented by the case of Diane*, who had been referred to the Learning Web by her probation officer. She had missed two different meetings without so much as a

* pseudonyms

phone call to explain her absence, and the student volunteer handling her case was ready to terminate her. Lingering concerns that Diane might not realize that in the Learning Web she had to assume responsibility led the volunteer to call her probation officer first. The probation officer reported that Diane was now off probation and keeping out of trouble. He urged continued effort to get her involved in the Learning Web. The volunteer decided to make one more call to Diane and try to spell out her responsibilities as a Learning Web apprentice. Diane would be told to make a decision and get back to the volunteer if she still wanted a placement. Otherwise, if she didn't come in or call, her case would be terminated.

Matching Structure and Purpose

The procedures used for intake, placement, and termination constitute a key structural feature of the Learning Web. They provide a good test of the extent to which the political and educational tenets of the Learning Web are realized in its operation.

The most striking characteristic of the procedure, at least in contrast to those found in conventional schools, is its flexibility. The procedure varies depending upon the needs of each potential apprentice. Those with clear interests are treated differently from those who can't decide what it is they want to learn about. At every stage of the procedure at least two options are open to the young person: proceeding to the next stage or withdrawing. Withdrawing, however, does not mean the same as dropping out or being expelled from school. A decision not to undertake or continue an apprenticeship is seen by Learning Web staff as a positive decision, not a failure. Those who choose to withdraw are urged to get back in touch if they change their minds or develop a new interest. A placement that lasts two weeks is interpreted as a valuable experience because someone has learned what he doesn't like.

There are other, less drastic choices to be made too. The most important is the choice of placements. Potential apprentices are usually offered not only a choice of interest areas, but within a particular area they may choose from more than one placement.

Having made a selection, apprentices remain free to change their minds about who their mentor is and what interests they wish to pursue. The decision about how long to continue the apprenticeship is also in the hands of the apprentice, given the mentor's limitations or requirements.

The structure of the Learning Web as it is embodied in the procedures used for intake, placement, and termination seems quite consistent with the Learning Web's goals. Those goals including enabling young people to explore their community, learn skills, and take control of a part of their education. The consistency of goals and structure would not deserve comment if it were not rare, especially among alternative educational organizations. Proponents of alternative education have often failed because they proceeded to eliminate structures they perceived as inimical to learning without paying attention to the difficult process of creating new, "liberating," "enabling," or "convivial" structures. The Learning Web is unusual and exemplary in this regard.

This point brings up an important area of conflict between the Learning Web as it has developed and Illich's ideas about learning webs from which it sprang. Illich described the functioning of learning webs as being even more flexible and open than the Learning Web is. He made no mention of recruiting either apprentices or mentors, of "hurdles," or intake interviews or termination. Illich's learning web was to be as voluntary as a computer dating service. The matching process would be done mechanically and arrangements for an apprenticeship would depend solely on the two parties. No mention was made of selection, supervision, or evaluation.

I suspect that Illich would not approve of the Learning Web's procedures. He would probably view them as too intrusive and too contolling. On the other hand, I suspect that his version of the learning web would not work. At least it would not work in the midst of the kinds of institutions that characterize our society. As long as people have been socialized by "coercive" institutions, they are unlikely to demonstrate the kind of initiative required of them in institutions like Illich's learning web. Those who need the experience least are the ones who would be most likely to take advantage of the

opportunity. The Learning Web, therefore, is a more realistic organization than Illich envisioned and one that demonstrates how unconventional educational objectives can be embodied in an unconventional organizational structure.

REFERENCES

Arms, M. and Denman, D. Touching the world: Adolescents, adults, and action learning. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975.

Argyris, C. Alternative schools: A behavioral analysis. Teachers College Record, 1974, 75, 429-53.

Dewey, J. Democracy and education. New York: Free Press, 1916/1966.

Dewey, J. Experience and education. New York: Collier, 1938/1963.

Freire, P. Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: The Seabury Press, 1970.

Graubard, A. A study of free schools. Final report, Contract HEW-OS-70-155. December, 1971.

Illich, I. Deschooling society. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Moore, D.T. "Social order in an alternative school." Teachers College Record, 1978, 79(3), 437-460.

Walberg, H.J. and Thomas, S.C. Open education: An operational definition and validation in Great Britain and the United States. American Educational Research Journal, 1972, 9, 197-202.

Whitham, M. Deschooling revisited: Building a learning web. Alternatives, 1976, 1(2), 20-24.